

March 31, 2016

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RE: Final Report:  
Grant to the University of Idaho  
USGS Award No G15AP00157  
Title: Sponsorship – PNW Climate Science Conference, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Use of Funds: Support of Conference Organizing Staff  
Grant Amount: \$5,000.00  
Grant Date: 10/1/2015 to 12/31/2015

FR: University of Idaho, Moscow Idaho

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## **Sixth Annual Northwest Climate Conference**

**November 3 – 5, 2015 | Coeur d’Alene, Idaho**

### **1 Overview**

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The annual Northwest Climate Conference is the region's premier opportunity for a cross-disciplinary exchange of knowledge and ideas relating to climate impacts and adaptation. The conference brings together hundreds of researchers, resource managers and policy makers from academia, public agencies, sovereign tribal nations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, to share the latest climate science, challenges to infrastructure, industry, environment and communities, and adaptive solutions. The conference also provides a forum for scientist, manager, and practitioner collaboration and discussion of emerging challenges, policy and management objectives, and information needs related to regional climate impacts and adaptation measures.

Previously named the Pacific Northwest Climate Science Conference, the 2015 conference was the sixth annual climate conference for the Northwest region. The name change is reflective of the conference goal of inclusiveness of the broad range of climate-related topics from all sub-regions of the Northwest, and provides flexibility to shape the conference over time to incorporate the growing body of issues important to the understanding of climate science, impacts, mitigation, and adaption in the region.

The 2015 conference was held November 3 – 5, 2016 in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho in the Coeur d’Alene Resort Conference Center. The traditional science and outreach conference on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> included a mix of plenary and concurrent sessions for scientists and practitioners, a poster session, networking reception, and – new this year – a Tools Café in which technological or digital tools for climate change research or education were demonstrated. This year’s science-outreach sessions had 294 registrants, and 27 local high school students attended the in-reach and mentoring sessions on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

More than 120 presenters engaged with conference attendees on topics including:

- Agricultural Impacts and Mitigation Strategies
- Northwest Climate Trends and Conditions
- Hydrology and Impacts on Water Resources
- Wildfire Ecology and Management
- Wildlife Habitat Impacts and Conservation Strategies
- Impacts on Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecosystems
- Adaptation and Working Across Boundaries (interdisciplinary efforts)

The conference agenda, presentation abstracts, and links to plenary and concurrent session videos can be found at the conference webpage [pnwclimateconference.org](http://pnwclimateconference.org).

In addition to the traditional conference format, this year's conference included three new features. A hosted, plenary session open to the public on 3 November focused on the impact of climate on wildlife and fisheries habitat in the region. This public plenary attracted over 300 attendees, including 150 local fish and wildlife enthusiasts who learned about climate impacts on recreational resources. This year's opening plenary session had a welcome from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe on whose traditional lands the conference events were taking place. This welcome included comments from a member of the Tribal Council, an invocation by the Tribal Director of Cultural Resources, and a drumming ceremony by tribal youth and mentors. And, finally, this year's conference committee worked actively with local educators and civic and government leaders in Coeur d'Alene to provide opportunities for local students, government leaders and citizens to be involved with the conference.

Specifically, 27 high school students attended one day of the conference, 5 high school students were paired with University student mentors, and climate experts attending the conference gave presentations to students in their schools and to local civic organizations over the three conference days. These efforts are estimated to have reached approximately 1000 students and 500 members of the local community.

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"I think the outreach efforts were excellent and one of the great things to come from the conference. Nice work reaching out to citizens and doing what you can to help them understand the implications of climate change."

– Resource Manager, Provincial Agency

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The conference Keynote Address on the morning of 4 November was delivered by Mr. Robert Bonnie, U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. Bonnie discussed the evolution of the climate change debate in Washington, D.C., and noted that what two decades ago may have seemed long term problems are now central to current conversations. Mr. Bonnie noted the importance of climate change impacts as a driver of the climate debate at the national level, citing the influence that ongoing drought and intensifying wildfires in the West have had on calls for federal response to climate change. As a result of the federal call to action, including President Obama's 2014 Climate Action Plan, agencies like the U.S. Department of the Interior and USDA are incorporating climate studies and response into their budgets to support the work of U.S. DoI regional Climate Science Centers and USDA regional Climate Hubs – both of which were represented at the Northwest Climate Conference.

A 15-question survey was sent to the conference registrants the week following the conference to determine levels of satisfaction with the various sessions and events. Ninety one percent of the 28% of registrants responding reported high satisfaction with

the overall organization of the conference. High satisfaction rates were reported for the keynote (97%), plenary (92%), and poster sessions (91%), and the inaugural Tools Café (88%), and organized networking opportunities (90%).

## **2 Use of U.S. DoI Northwest Climate Science Center Funding**

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The Northwest Climate Science Center contributed \$5,000 to the conference and was featured prominently as a conference sponsor in print and web-based media and during the conference opening plenary and public sessions. NWCSC sponsorship funds were earmarked to cover subsidized registration for graduate students and for tribal members and their affiliates attending the conference.

Graduate student scholarship recipients (n=29) were from several universities in the region, including: University of Idaho, Washington State University, Oregon State University, Boise State University, University of Washington, Western Washington University, Eastern Washington University, and the Canadian university Royal Roads.

Tribal scholarship recipients (n=7) were members and staff of the Colville Confederated Tribes, Quinault Indian Nation, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and Nez Perce Tribe.

## **3 For More Information**

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For more information on the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Northwest Climate Conference, please contact Steven Daley-Laursen in the Department of Natural Resources and Society at the University of Idaho (208-885-5804, [stevendl@uidaho.edu](mailto:stevendl@uidaho.edu)).